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casque, the headpiece and the face guard immediately locked together, as in almost affectionate embrace, after their three hundred and forty years of separation!" It is clear that the visor belongs to the casque (fig. 1): it adjusts accurately, the small hook fitting into its peg-fastener; workmanship, preservation, and metal are the same; the rivets correspond, even the washers of the rivets and the scraps of lining they still hold in place; moreover, since the visor was cleaned, the gilding reappears in similar degree and tone. But the best evidence that it belonged to our casque is that it appears actually in place in our early portrait (fig. 3). It has lost its bib-plate, it is true, but elsewhere it corresponds to a nicety. The amorini in the picture, the leafwork, the encircling bright bands are just as they occur in the object itself. There is proof, then, that the buffe was attached to its casque as late as 1620.

There can be no doubt, finally, as to the identity of our casque and buffe with the one pictured in the Florentine portrait. An object of such importance, "one of the most beautiful of the period" (Laking), "une des plus belles bourguignotes que l'on connaisse" (de Cosson), is not known in duplicate, if for no better reason than that it could be made only by a great artist who would rather devote his talent and his year's labor to producing a work of independent merit. Nor would a patron be apt to pay for a copied helmet the formidable price of a *chef-d'œuvre*. In a word, the casque and its picture agree in extraordinary detail. The foliation, the mythological personages, the strapwork, all are present: slight variants occur only in the crest and on the brow. Here no mascaron is present in our picture, but we have, none the less, good reason to believe that it existed in the painter's model; for, though he omitted to introduce the face of the lion, he copied accurately its horns; hence we justly conclude that he omitted the mascaron only when he finished the picture in his studio, perhaps for some technical reason, e.g. that it did not appear well in perspective.

B. D.

A NOTE ON THE PHYFE EXHIBITION

THE furniture from the workshop of Duncan Phyfe, shown in the loan exhibition¹ which will continue until December fifteenth, bears decidedly a message for furniture designers and cabinet-makers today. One impression which is given by the exhibition as a whole is the complete naturalness of the style in which Phyfe worked and the ease with which he gained the qualities which he desired. There is no suggestion of striving for effect, but the furniture as a whole possesses a marked consistency and a reality devoid of affectation.

This is certainly no accidental result. It bespeaks on Phyfe's part, first of all, a more than ordinary skill and training in design, combined with a justness of taste which led him almost unerringly to employ those design forms and decorative details which would harmonize correctly one with another.

In the broader aspect of his design, his work is marked by very real freedom in the use of proportion. He obviously employed no hard and fast rules for proportions such as those found in certain architecture of the eighteenth century. This freedom of his—the result of adequate training and experience—enabled him to respond to changes of contemporary taste. In the group of furniture showing Directoire influence are noted that attenuation of vertical proportion and the delicate relation between vertical and horizontal members which characterized not only the furniture of that period, but the architecture and costumes as well. This proportional relation is not confined to the woodwork alone, but is employed, perhaps intuitively, in the studied relationship between the voids and solids of the design.

The flexibility of proportion which marks Phyfe's work as that of a master-craftsman is equaled by his freedom of line. Whether in the simple rectangular construction of

¹Additional lenders to the Phyfe exhibition whose loans arrived too late for mention in the last BULLETIN are Mr. and Mrs. Albert R. Searles, Miss Cornelia V. R. Delafield, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph H. Portugal, and Mrs. A. R. Peabody.

the piece of Sheraton derivation or the more complicated joining of those of Directoire and Empire influence, the flowing lines of the structural portions tell us as clearly as anything can, that here was no designer studying in only three dimensions, but one who saw the design as a whole in the "round." It is because of this that each piece is as effectively seen from an oblique angle as it is from directly in front. The curves in each type of furniture are not dully mechanical, but would seem to be fine, firm, freehand ones full of life and strong where structural requirements dictate.

The feeling for structure is seldom violated. In only one or two cases can we point to forms where the structural effect is weakened by the desire for decorative line, and in each case we are compensated by the pleasantness of the result.

Above all, the design is controlled by adaptability to use. Every sofa, table, and chair is as practical for every-day use now as it was when it was made. The fine game table lent by Mr. and Mrs. Harry H. Benkard is an example of a piece made for a special purpose which shows a most economical and skilful design, meeting exactly the requirements of usage.

The decorative motives are comparatively few in number, but exist in many combinations. It is this very limitation of decorative motives which gives to the group as a whole its marked consistency. The carving is low in relief and so placed as to emphasize the structural quality and never to interfere with the general form. The consistency of decorative motives and methods is emphasized by their consistency of scale.

The delightful veneered treatments, beautiful in themselves, are marks which express most clearly of all the craftsman's love of his work. These exquisite details are so unobtrusive as to escape any but the eye of the connoisseur and no other feeling than affection for his work could have led our cabinet-maker to lavish care and thought upon such small details as these.

The finely chosen woods which are used—chiefly mahogany with brilliant grain-satinwood, and maple—are decorative ele-

ments in themselves and contribute in full measure to the beauty of each piece.

If further assurance of Phyfe's thorough-going craftsmanship were needed, the hidden details of construction would supply the final word. His joinery is perfect to the hair's-breadth, his braces dovetailed as well as mortised, and the dovetails joining drawer fronts to sides are sometimes as small as an eighth of an inch in the widest part. If any doubt assails one as to the authenticity of a Phyfe piece, such details of construction supply the final argument.

These are the aspects of Phyfe's work which give to any large group of it that air of naturalness and unostentatious gentility which is its outstanding characteristic. It is the work of an artist-craftsman, adequately trained in both the artistic and the mechanical media of his craft. To him, of equal importance were his design and decoration, his materials and construction, and the purposes for which these were employed. No detail was too small, no effort too great for his ready hand. And in this fact, that the hand executed what the brain conceived, lies the explanation of the poise and just taste which characterize the work of the great cabinet-makers of the past, Phyfe not the least of these.

C. O. C.

OLD WOODCUTS AND MODERN ILLUSTRATIONS

THE fashion of collecting old prints, delightful and praiseworthy as it is, has resulted not unnaturally in certain processes which were used by the elders having about them a glamour which to some extent ennobles anything done in them, whether or not that anything be itself good. Thus the words "an etching" currently stand for something, shall one say, more worthy of respect in the popular mind than the words "a woodcut." When Browning wrote and wanted by the use of one name to typify all of what was best in prints, he selected that of Marc Antonio. But today, were he alive and facing the same general problem, he would probably say Rembrandt or Whistler. The change means more than would appear immedi-